# Applying boundary objects to create coherence between management decisions regarding prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders and implemented changes

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**Purpose.** This study aims to support social healthcare workplaces with methods to establish coherence between management decisions regarding prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) and the work related preventive changes implemented in the organization. The study builds on the known risk factors for developing MSD in combination with the theory of explication of tacit knowledge by the use of boundary objects (Carlile, 2002).

**Design/Methodology.** Searching the literature of visual knowledge generating methods, we selected those who focus on the work process and relate to one or more of the risk factors of MSD. The search resulted in the following methods: Workbooks, Photo-Safari, Layout Games, Employee Exchange, Videos and the Fishbone workshop. Three Occupational Health and Safety Departments in municipalities and one hospital tested the methods, which several public workplaces will apply starting January 2017.

**Results.** The identified visualization methods each addresses specific risk factors of MSD but when combined, they provide a holistic insight in to the work-related causes to MSD at the workplace. The new knowledge forms the basis for focused work-related preventive changes. The test participants found the methods applicable in relation to create coherence between strategy and practice.

**Research implications:** Our preliminary results imply that visualization methods can generate new knowledge about work-related causes to MSD, identification of new preventive changes and how they link to the preventive MSD strategy.

**Originality/Value.** The study investigates the application of boundary objects in the identification of causes and implementation of a preventive MSD strategy and work-related changes.